

Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**

Monday, May 28, 2007  
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**Editor's Note:** The President was at Camp David, MD, on May 25, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, May 25, 2007

**Proclamation 8147—World Trade Week, 2007**

*May 18, 2007*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

World trade is essential to promoting global economic growth, development, freedom, and prosperity. During World Trade Week, we underscore our commitment to free and fair trade and acknowledge the benefits of open markets for our citizens and for people around the globe.

Trade creates wealth and opportunities, and United States engagement in the global economy has contributed to rising living standards throughout our country. Businesses that participate in international trade are more productive, have higher employment growth, and pay greater wages. Advancing free trade on a level playing field helps ensure that America benefits from the international market.

My Administration is committed to reducing barriers to trade, strengthening our strategic partnerships, and promoting economic growth throughout the world. At the beginning of my Administration, America had free trade agreements with three countries. Today, we have free trade agreements in force with 14 countries, creating benefits for American businesses, workers, and consumers. These trade agreements are particularly important for small and medium-sized companies to help them identify and take full advantage of new trade opportunities.

The United States continues to work with other nations in the World Trade Organization to complete the Doha Development Round, which has the potential to lift millions of people out of poverty. I have also called upon the Congress to extend Trade Promotion Authority so we can complete the Doha Round and continue to negotiate ro-

bust trade agreements. By working to expand trade, we open new markets for American products and services and help build free economies that can raise the standard of living for families.

**Now, Therefore I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 20 through May 26, 2007, as World Trade Week. I encourage all Americans to observe this week with events, trade shows, and educational programs that celebrate the benefits of trade to our Nation and the global economy.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 22, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 23. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Proclamation 8148—National Maritime Day, 2007**

*May 18, 2007*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

America has a proud maritime history, and the United States Merchant Marine has played a vital role in helping meet our country's economic and national security needs. On National Maritime Day, we honor merchant mariners for their dedication to promoting commerce and protecting our freedom.

During times of peace, the U.S. Merchant Marine helps ensure our economic security by keeping the oceans open to trade. Ships operated by merchant mariners transport goods across our Nation's waterways and on the high seas around the world to connect American businesses and consumers with valuable foreign markets and commodities. The skill and expertise of merchant mariners facilitates trade and helps to strengthen our economy.

In times of war, the Merchant Marine is the lifeline of our troops overseas. By carrying critical supplies, equipment, and personnel, merchant mariners provide essential support to our Armed Forces and help advance the cause of freedom. Today, merchant mariners are supporting operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and their devotion to duty is a tribute to the generations of men and women who have served our Nation with courage and determination in every conflict in America's history. On this day, and throughout the year, America is grateful for their service.

In recognition of the importance of the U.S. Merchant Marine, the Congress, by joint resolution approved on May 20, 1933, as amended, has designated May 22 of each year as "National Maritime Day," and has authorized and requested that the President issue an annual proclamation calling for its appropriate observance.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 2007, as National Maritime Day. I call upon the people of the United States to mark this observance by honoring the service of merchant mariners and by displaying the flag of the United States at their homes and in their communities. I also request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 22, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 23. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **The President's Radio Address**

*May 19, 2007*

Good morning. This week, my administration reached an agreement with Republicans and Democrats in the Senate on immigration reform. I thank the leaders in both parties who worked hard to produce legislation that will secure the border, restore respect for the law, and meet the legitimate needs of our economy.

This legislation includes all the elements required for comprehensive immigration reform. It will improve security at our borders. It will give employers new tools to verify the employment status of workers and hold businesses to account for those they hire. It will create a temporary-worker program. It will help us resolve the status of millions of illegal immigrants who are here already, without animosity and without amnesty. And it will honor the great American tradition of the melting pot by strengthening our efforts to help new arrivals assimilate into our society.

Here's how the bill works. First, it will require the strong border security and enforcement benchmarks are met before other elements of the legislation are implemented. These benchmarks include completing our plan to double the number of Border Patrol agents, improving border infrastructure, and maintaining enough beds in our detention facilities so that all those apprehended at the border can be held and returned to their home countries. We will also improve work-site enforcement by implementing an effective system to verify worker eligibility using tamper-resistant identification cards and by imposing stiffer penalties on companies that knowingly violate the law. Once these benchmarks are met, they will trigger other provisions of comprehensive reform.

The legislation will create a new temporary-worker program. Such a program will help our economy and take pressure off the border by providing foreign workers with a legal and orderly way to enter our country to fill jobs that Americans are not doing. To

ensure that this program is truly temporary, workers will be limited to three 2-year terms, with at least a year spent outside the United States between each term. Temporary workers will be allowed to bring immediate family members only if they demonstrate that they can support them financially and that their family members are covered by health insurance.

This legislation will also help resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in our country, without amnesty. Those who come out of the shadows will be given probationary status. If they pass a strict background check, pay a fine, hold a job, maintain a clean criminal record, and eventually learn English, they will qualify for and maintain a Z visa. If they want to become citizens, they have to do all these things plus pay an additional fine, go to the back of the line, pass a citizenship test, and return to their country to apply for their green card.

This legislation will also strengthen our efforts to help new immigrants assimilate. The key to unlocking the full promise of America is the ability to speak English. This bill affirms that English is the language of the United States. And it provides new opportunities for immigrants to learn English and embrace the shared ideals that bind us as a nation.

In addition, this legislation will clear the backlog of family members who've applied to come to our country lawfully and have been waiting patiently in line. This legislation will end chain migration by limiting the relatives who can automatically receive green cards to spouses and minor children. And this legislation will transform our immigration system so that future immigration decisions are focused on admitting immigrants who have the skills, education, and English proficiency that will help America compete in a global economy.

I realize that many hold strong convictions on this issue, and reaching an agreement was not easy. I appreciate the efforts of Senators who came together to craft this important

legislation. This bill brings us closer to an immigration system that enforces our laws and upholds the great American tradition of welcoming those who share our values and our love of freedom.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on May 18 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 18 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Message on the Observance of Cuban Independence Day, 2007**

*May 18, 2007*

I send greetings to all those celebrating the 105th anniversary of Cuba's Independence.

The longing for justice, freedom, and human rights is a desire that can be delayed but never denied. The United States remains committed to extending the full blessings of liberty around the world, and on this important milestone, we stand united with freedom-loving people of all nations in the conviction that Cuba's future must be one of dignity, liberty, and opportunity.

This day is also an opportunity to recognize the generations of Cuban Americans who have made contributions to our society. Your hard work and high ideals reflect the best of America and enrich our Nation.

Laura and I send our best wishes. May God bless the people of Cuba and all the sons and daughters of Cuba who call America home.

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 20. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

**Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency Protecting the Development Fund for Iraq and Certain Other Property in Which Iraq Has an Interest**

*May 18, 2007*

On May 22, 2003, by Executive Order 13303, I declared a national emergency protecting the Development Fund for Iraq and certain other property in which Iraq has an interest, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706) (IEEPA). I took this action to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the obstacles to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq, the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in the country, and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq constituted by the threat of attachment or other judicial process against the Development Fund for Iraq, Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products, and interests therein, and proceeds, obligations, or any financial instruments of any nature whatsoever arising from or related to the sale or marketing thereof, and interests therein.

In Executive Order 13315, of August 28, 2003, Executive Order 13350 of July 29, 2004, and Executive Order 13364 of November 29, 2004, I modified the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13303 and amended the steps taken pursuant to it.

Because the obstacles to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq, the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in the country, and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, the national emergency declared on May 22, 2003, and the measures adopted on that date, August 28, 2003, July 29, 2004, and November 29, 2004, to deal with that emergency must continue in effect beyond May 22, 2007. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency protecting the Develop-

ment Fund for Iraq and certain other property in which Iraq has an interest.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
May 18, 2007.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 1:57 p.m., May 18, 2007]

NOTE: This notice was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 21, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on May 21.

**Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency Protecting the Development Fund for Iraq and Certain Other Property in Which Iraq Has an Interest**

*May 18, 2007*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication. This notice states that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, as modified in scope and relied upon for additional steps taken in Executive Order 13315 of August 28, 2003, Executive Order 13350 of July 29, 2004, and Executive Order 13364 of November 29, 2004, is to continue in effect beyond May 22, 2007.

The threats of attachment or other judicial process against (i) the Development Fund for Iraq, (ii) Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products, and interests therein, and proceeds, obligations, or any financial instruments of any nature whatsoever arising from or related to the sale or marketing thereof, and interests therein, or (iii) any accounts,

assets, investments, or any other property of any kind owned by, belonging to, or held by, on behalf of, or otherwise for the Central Bank of Iraq obstruct the orderly reconstruction of Iraq. These threats also impede the restoration and maintenance of peace and security and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq. These threats continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Accordingly, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency protecting the Development Fund for Iraq, certain other property in which Iraq has an interest, and the Central Bank of Iraq and maintain in force the measures to respond to this threat.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
May 18, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 21.

**The President's News Conference  
With Secretary General Jakob  
Gijssels "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of  
the North Atlantic Treaty  
Organization in Crawford, Texas  
May 21, 2007**

**President Bush.** Thank you all for coming. Mr. Secretary General, thanks very much for joining us. Laura and I are really happy to have you here at our place in Crawford. And thank you very much for bringing Jeannine with you. We had a lovely dinner last night, and that's what you'd expect when friends get together.

I appreciate your leadership. The Secretary General of NATO has been a strong advocate of fighting terror, spreading freedom, helping the oppressed, and modernizing this important alliance. I can't thank you enough for being steadfast and strong.

We spent a lot of time talking about Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a vital mission for the United States; it's a vital mission for our allies in Europe because what happens in Afghanistan matters to the security of our countries. We appreciate the fact that in Afghani-

stan, you'll find NATO's largest deployment, thousands of miles from Europe. And success in that country is vital. I thank you for setting that important goal for the world to rally around. The NATO mission in Afghanistan includes more than 15,000 U.S. troops, 21,000 troops from 36 other nations, including all our allies. That wouldn't be happening without your leadership. Together with more than 100,000 Afghan security forces, we're working to support Afghanistan's elected Government.

The Secretary General is also focused on ensuring that NATO commanders have the forces they need to defeat the extremists and murderers who are trying to stop the advance of that country. I pledged to the Secretary General, we'll work with our NATO allies to convince them that they must share more of the burden and must all share the risks in meeting our goal.

We also appreciate the fact that Afghanistan requires more than military action. We support a long-term, comprehensive strategy to help strengthen Afghanistan's democratic institutions and help create the economic opportunity that will help this young democracy survive and thrive.

The Secretary General is also determined to help transform NATO from a cold war institution into an alliance that can continue to be effective, and that means an alliance which will meet the security threats of the 21st century. And so we talked about the need to have more special operations forces and strategic airlift capabilities.

I appreciate his leadership in recognizing that in order for NATO to be effective, it has to transform itself into an organization that actually meets the threats that free nations face. We talked about enlargement. We're looking forward to going to the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest to talk about enlargement. And we—I pledged to the Secretary General that I'll work with nations that are interested in becoming a part of NATO over the next year to make sure they meet the requirements necessary for a country to be accepted into NATO.

We talked about missile defense. NATO allies and other nations recognize the threat we face from ballistic missiles launched by a rogue state. I appreciate the fact that the



Secretary General agrees that U.S. missile defense plans complement NATO efforts to keep all nations safe from attack. And of course, I will continue to reach out to Russia. I sent Secretary Gates to Russia recently to have a full and transparent conversation with President Putin and his Cabinet to make sure that the Russians understand that this missile shield is not directed at them but, in fact, directed at other nations that could conceivably affect the peace of Europe. I appreciate the fact that the NATO-Russian Council is a integral part of the Secretary General's plans to make sure that Russia fully understands that—our intentions.

And so, Mr. Secretary General, thanks for coming. It's been a good trip. We're glad you're here, and the podium is yours.

**Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.**  
Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Let me start by, on behalf of Jeannine, thank you and Mrs. Laura Bush most warmly for the wonderful hospitality we have enjoyed and are enjoying on this beautiful ranch. It is really great of you to have us here. We had good conversations a moment ago, about which I'll make a few remarks, but I should start with the atmosphere and the ambiance at the Crawford Ranch. That's beautiful. Thank you ever so much for that, on behalf of the two of us.

Mr. President, you mentioned already a number of subjects, and if we look at those from a NATO perspective, it is very clear that NATO's operations and missions are of primary importance. And among those operations, of course, Afghanistan. If we discuss Afghanistan—I should start by saying that we, the international community—NATO forces, U.S. forces—are there to help rebuild and develop that nation. That nation deserves to be developed and to be rebuilt.

But we are there for other reason as well. Afghanistan is still one of the frontlines in our fight against terrorism. And my—it is my strong conviction that that frontline should not become a faultline. And that is why it's so important that all 26 NATO allies are committed to Afghanistan and that the whole international community, for the longer term, stays committed to that nation.

And I know it's tough from time to time. And I know and you know that at any price,

NATO forces and coalition forces will try to avoid civilian casualties. We'll do that, and we'll look very seriously into that—the military commanders, us, we as politicians, as leaders. But let me tell you one thing: We are not in the same moral category as our opponents, as the Taliban in Afghanistan. We don't behead people. We don't burn schools. We don't kill teachers. We don't plant roadside bombs. We don't send in suicide bombers. And if we talk about innocent Afghan civilians—yes, dramatically, the result of our military actions could be that civilians, innocent civilians are killed, but look at the number of Afghan civilians killed by the Taliban and by our opposing forces. In brief, we are not in the same moral category there, and that's, I think, a very important mission.

I do hope, and the President said it already, that NATO as a whole alliance will stay committed to Afghanistan. It is important for that operation to succeed. And if you visit the country, if you go there, you see a lot of reconstruction and development going on. On the other hand, we'll be tough—NATO, I said, will be tough where there's a need to be tough, our most important operation.

The second remark—the President mentioned this already—we discussed missile defense, very important subjects giving vulnerabilities. We had the U.S. discussion on the so-called third site in Europe. I think it will be now up to NATO—and I'll try to lead NATO into that direction—but apart from the third site and the U.S. plans, there will be a NATO system which complements, which will be bolted in the U.S. system so that everybody and everything will be covered for the long-range threats, the medium-range threats, and the short-range threats—an important element, I think.

We discussed, of course, Kosovo. While I think it's of great importance that NATO allies—but it's now in the Security Council and the U.S. Presidency this month—that there's full support for the Ahtisaari proposals. And I would like to see, as NATO Secretary General—we have 16,000 NATO forces in Kosovo to create an element—an environment, I should say, of stability and security—that we see a Security Council resolution so that the Ahtisaari proposals can be brought

into effect. So a resolution is important; the Ahtisaari proposals are good proposals.

We discussed, of course, also next year's NATO summit prospects for NATO enlargement. The nations who—knocking on NATO's door need encouragement, but they also need to perform further reforms so that we can have a successful summit in the spring of next year.

So, in brief, a great number of subjects we discussed in this informal atmosphere. Once again, thank you very much, Mr. President, for having us here. Thank you for the good conversations we had. You can rest assured that as Secretary General of NATO, I'll make the alliance work—in the sense that all 26 NATO allies will participate in NATO's operations and missions—and will show the solidarity on which this alliance is built.

Thank you so much.

**President Bush.** Thank you, sir.

We'll take two questions a side. In that there's only one questioner on the other side, it will be two questions and one question. Feller [Ben Feller, Associated Press].

#### **War on Terror in Afghanistan/Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. The Senate is considering a vote of no confidence in your Attorney General, and some Republican Senators have joined Democrats in calling for his resignation. Is it your intention to keep Alberto Gonzales as your Attorney General for the rest of your administration, regardless of what the Senate does?

And, Mr. Secretary General, if I may, you mentioned the deaths of civilians in Afghanistan. Is it your concern that those deaths are eroding the ability of NATO forces to do their work?

**President Bush.** Let me comment on that real quick. The Taliban likes to surround themselves with innocent civilians. That's their—part of their *modus operandi*. They don't mind using human shields because they devalue human life. That's why they're willing to kill innocent people to achieve political objectives.

And obviously, to the extent that the United States is working with our NATO allies in combat, we care deeply about protecting innocent life. And to those who—Af-

ghans who have lost innocent civilians, we grieve with you. To the Afghan families that have been affected by the Taliban using them as shields, we have great sympathy. We do not have sympathy, however, for the tactics of the Taliban.

Now, you asked about Alberto Gonzales. He has got my confidence. He has done nothing wrong. There's been enormous amount of attention on him—that there's been no wrongdoing on his part. He has testified in front of Congress. And I, frankly, view what's taking place in Washington today as pure political theater. And it is this kind of political theater that has caused the American people to lose confidence in how Washington operates.

I stand by Al Gonzales, and I would hope that people would be more sober in how they address these important issues. And they ought to get the job done of passing legislation, as opposed to figuring out how to be actors on the political theater stage.

**Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.** Let me add that—I'll stress again, like the President did—of course every innocent civilian fatality, death is one too many. But in a conflict, it is from time to time unavoidable—dramatically, but unavoidable. NATO and ISAF forces still have the support of the large majority of the Afghan people.

I had a long telephone conversation with President Karzai a few days ago on this subject. We'll avoid it. Our military commanders are doing everything they can. NATO, ISAF forces, and coalition forces are doing everything they can. But the President talked about Taliban tactics; we are in a different moral category. We'll be there; we'll try to, as quickly as possible, bring in, also, finance to see that these people can build up their lives again; and we'll do everything we can to avoid civilian casualties.

But I think if you talk about and ask me about the hearts and minds in Afghanistan, we still have very much the hearts and minds of the Afghan people, because they do see that their nation, their own nation has no future under Taliban rule. And I only have to refer to the kinds and type of Afghanistan we saw—you and I saw—under Taliban rule, a regime with the most gross human rights violations the world has seen.

Thank you.

**President Bush.** Do you want to call upon the one European person here?

**Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.** I could call upon the one European person here. [Laughter] Mr.—[inaudible].

**President Bush.** Thank you for coming. Brave of you.

**Q.** Thank you very much.

**President Bush.** It's the pioneering spirit that made America great. [Laughter]

#### **Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer's Visit to the Bush Ranch**

**Q.** I've just got one question. Mr. de Hoop Scheffer, how *gezellig* was it yesterday?

**Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.** It was very *gezellig*. I'll try to translate "*gezellig*" in American.

**President Bush.** [Inaudible]—that doesn't make it in my vocabulary.

**Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.** Very friendly, cozy atmosphere. We had a very, very nice move around the ranch with Mrs. Bush and the President, my wife and I. We had a splendid dinner in the house here at the ranch. This morning, I can tell you that the President and I had a mountain bike ride together. We had our conversations. So you can speak about a very nice weekend, and we had good talks on top of this. So what can one wish more? It was very *gezellig*.

**President Bush.** Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

#### **President's Decisionmaking/War on Terror**

**Q.** Mr. President, Jimmy Carter unleashed some fairly harsh criticism of you over the weekend. Were you surprised by this, and do you take much stock in what he said?

**President Bush.** Steve, you know, I get criticized a lot from different quarters, and that's just part of what happens when you're President. And I will continue to make decisions that I think are necessary to protect the American people from harm. I will continue to make decisions based upon certain

principles, one of which is my strong belief in the universality of freedom.

We're at war with an enemy that is relentless and determined, and it's essential that the decisions I make protect the American people as best as we can. And it turns out, my Presidency is such that we talk about how—with strong allies—how to defend ourselves. I firmly believe that in order to protect America—we must go on the offense against radicals, extremists, murderers in order to protect not only ourselves but our allies.

And I also realize that we're involved in an ideological struggle, that these murderers, these radicals, these extremists have got a point of view. If you want to find out what their point of view is about, look what happened in Afghanistan under the brutal relationship of the Taliban and Al Qaida. On the one hand, if you're a woman and spoke out or a woman and tried to advance, you were suppressed, in brutal fashion sometimes. And in the meantime, an enemy that hates America plotted and planned.

And so, look, I understand some people are—may not agree with the decisions I made. But what the American people need to know, I'm making them based upon what's best for this country.

And, anyway, thank you all for coming. It's—what was the word?

**Q.** *Gezellig*.

**President Bush.** *Gezellig*?

**Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.** *Gezellig*.

**Q.** [Inaudible]

**President Bush.** Yes. You talk about some good *gezellig*. [Laughter].

Thank you all.

**Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.** Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:22 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Jeannine de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot, wife of Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer; and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

### Commencement Address at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut

May 23, 2007

**The President.** Thank you all. Admiral Allen, thank you for that kind introduction. Admiral Burhoe, congratulations on your promotion. Academy staff and faculty, Congressman Chris Shays, State and local officials, distinguished guests, proud families, and, most importantly, members of the class of 2007: Thanks for having me.

It's a privilege to stand with the future leaders of the United States Coast Guard. Before you receive your degrees today, I want to make sure that you have learned your indoc. What is the Coast Guard?

**Cadets.** Mr. President, the Coast Guard is the hard nucleus about which the Navy forms in times of war, sir!

**The President.** I probably shouldn't relay that to the Secretary of the Navy. *[Laughter]*

I see a few "RCF Warriors" out there. Some of you earned demerits for failing to correct your storage; others got caught crawling under the fence on your way to Connecticut College. *[Laughter]* However you got bagged, help has arrived. *[Laughter]* In keeping with longstanding tradition, I hereby absolve all cadets who are on restriction for minor conduct offenses. I'll leave it to Admiral Burhoe to define exactly what "minor" means. *[Laughter]*

More than 6,000 young Americans applied to join the Coast Guard Academy class of 2007, and today just 228 will walk across this stage to receive your diploma and commission. You're a select few, and each of you worked really hard to get to this moment: survived R-Day, Swab Summer, and Friday morning drill practice with a kind and gentle soul, Chief Dillmann. *[Laughter]* You learned to brace up, do orderlies, square meals, and eat "hamsters" with your eyes in the boat. You arrived on this campus as swabs, and today you will leave as proud officers of the United States Coast Guard. Your teachers are proud; your parents are thrilled; and your Commander in Chief is grateful for your devotion to duty. Congratulations to you all.

You didn't make it to this day on your own. Many of you had the help of a special faculty member who mentored you along the way. Others made it only through as a result of the intervention of one man, Hopley Yeaton. He's the patron saint of the Square Root Club. For moms and dads, the Square Root Club is an association of students whose GPA is so low that when you take its square root, it grows larger. *[Laughter]* Unfortunately, they didn't have that club where I went to college—*[laughter]*. Perhaps you'll make me an honorary member. *[Laughter]*

Whether you're graduating today at the top of your class or by the skin of your teeth, your presence on this field is a tremendous accomplishment. And it would not have been possible without the support of the families who believed in you and encouraged you. So I ask all the parents and loved ones here today to stand and be recognized by the class of 2007.

The degree you've earned will command respect wherever you go, and you will carry the lessons you learned here for the rest of your lives. This Academy has tested your minds, your bodies, and your character, and having passed these trials, you now embark on a voyage as officers in the oldest continuous Marine time—maritime service.

The history of the Coast Guard dates back more than two centuries to the Revenue Cutter Service, established under the Presidency of George Washington, or as I call him, the first George W. *[Laughter]* Since its inception, the Coast Guard has conducted search and rescue missions, enforced our maritime laws, protected our marine environment, come to the aid of stranded boaters, and helped staunch the flow of illegal drugs and illegal migrants to our shores. And in this new century, the Coast Guard continues to carry out these vital missions.

Americans rely on the Coast Guard in times of disaster. When Hurricane Katrina hit our Nation's gulf coast, the men and women of the Coast Guard swung into action, hanging from helicopters, pulling people off rooftops and out of trees, and rescuing more than 33,000 people. When storms and floods and tragedy strike, Americans know that they can count on the United States Coast Guard.

Americans relied on the Coast Guard on September the 11th, 2001. After terrorists struck the Twin Towers, the Coast Guard station on Staten Island put out a call for all available boats and organized a massive flotilla of military and civilian craft that evacuated hundreds of thousands of people from lower Manhattan. It was the largest waterborne evacuation in our Nation's history. And in the days that followed, the men and women of the Coast Guard stayed on the job, assisting operations at Ground Zero, sending chaplains to comfort the bereaved, and coordinating a round-the-clock defense of New York Harbor and other vital ports. In a time of crisis, the Coast Guard did its job and did it well.

On September the 11th, the homefront you protect became a battlefield in a new and unprecedented war. That day, our Nation changed forever and so did the mission of the United States Coast Guard. This service assumed new and essential responsibilities: to defend our Nation against terrorist infiltration and to help stop new attacks before they kill our people.

As part of Operation Noble Eagle, the men and women of the Coast Guard are protecting more than 360 ports and more than 95,000 miles of coastline. Overseas, the Coast Guard is conducting maritime intercept operations in the Persian Gulf, patrolling the waters off Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The men and women of the Coast Guard are serving with courage, and the American people are grateful to live behind your Shield of Freedom.

Soon you'll join your fellow Coasties in carrying out these and other missions, and this Academy has prepared you well for the new challenges you will face in this war on terror. During your time here, you've taken courses in terrorist tactics and counterterrorism strategies; you've studied radiation detection, remote sensing, and the handling of hazardous materials; you participated in military exercises that have prepared you for the threats of this new century.

You'll need all this training to help keep your fellow citizens safe. In this war, we face a brutal enemy that has already killed thousands in our midst and is determined to bring even greater destruction to our shores. We're

blessed that there has not been another terrorist attack on our homeland in the past 5½ years. This is not for lack of effort on the part of the enemy. Since 9/11, Al Qaida and its allies have succeeded in carrying out horrific attacks across the world; Al Qaida leaders have repeatedly made clear they intend to strike our country again.

In January of last year, Usama bin Laden warned the American people, quote, "Operations are under preparation, and you will see them on your own ground once they are finished," end quote. Seven months later, British authorities broke up the most ambitious known Al Qaida threat to the homeland since the 9/11 attacks, a plot to blow up passenger airplanes flying to America. Our intelligence community believes that this plot was just 2 or 3 weeks away from execution. If it had been carried out, it could have rivaled 9/11 in death and destruction.

This was not the first Al Qaida plot that has been foiled since 9/11. In December 2001, we captured an Al Qaida operative named Ali Salih al-Mari. Our intelligence community believes that Ali Salih was training in poisons at an Al Qaida camp in Afghanistan and had been sent to the United States before September the 11th to serve as a sleeper agent ready for follow-on attacks. He was ordered to our country by 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, who is now in U.S. custody. Our intelligence community believes that KSM brought Ali Salih to meet Usama bin Laden, where he pledged his loyalty to the Al Qaida leader and offered himself up as a martyr. Among the potential targets our intelligence community believes this Al Qaida operative discussed with KSM were water reservoirs, the New York Stock Exchange, and United States military academies such as this one.

We also broke up two other post-9/11 aviation plots. The first, in 2002, was a plot by Khalid Sheikh Mohammad to repeat the destruction of 9/11 by sending operatives to hijack an airplane and fly into the tallest building on the west coast. During a hearing at Guantanamo Bay just 2 months ago, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad stated that the intended target was the Library Tower in Los Angeles. And in 2003, we uncovered and stopped a plot led by another suspected senior Al Qaida

operative named Abu Bakr al-Azdi. Our intelligence community believes this plot was to be another east coast aviation attack, including multiple airplanes that had been hijacked and then crashing into targets into the United States.

There is a reason that these and other plots have thus far not succeeded. Since September the 11th, we have taken bold action at home and abroad to keep our people safe.

To help stop new attacks on our country, we have undertaken the most sweeping reorganization of the Federal Government since the start of the cold war. We created the new Department of Homeland Security, merging 22 different Government organizations, including the Coast Guard, into a single Department with a clear mission: to protect America from future attacks.

To stop new attacks on our country, we've strengthened our Nation's intelligence community. We created the position of the Director of National Intelligence to ensure our intelligence agencies operate as a single, unified enterprise. We created the National Counterterrorism Center, where the FBI, the CIA, and other agencies work side by side to track terrorist threats across the world. We directed the National Security Agency to monitor international terrorist communications. We established a program run by the CIA to detain and question key terrorist leaders and operatives. These measures are vital; these measures are working; and these measures have helped prevent an attack on our homeland.

To help stop new attacks on our country, we passed the PATRIOT Act, breaking down the walls that had prevented Federal law enforcement and intelligence communities from sharing information about potential terrorist activities. We've transformed the FBI into an agency whose primary focus is stopping terrorist attacks. We've expanded the number of FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces from 35 before 9/11 to more than 100 today. And we saw their effectiveness recently when one of these teams helped disrupt a plot by a group of Al Qaida-inspired extremists to kill American soldiers at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

To help stop new attacks on our country, we launched the BioWatch program, placing

state-of-the-art equipment in major U.S. cities to detect biological agents. To help prevent terrorists from bringing nuclear or radiological weapons into our country, we're placing radiation detectors in all major U.S. ports. We placed advanced screening equipment and U.S. Homeland Security personnel at foreign ports, so we can prescreen cargo headed for America. We're determined to stop the world's most dangerous men from striking America with the world's most dangerous weapons. And the Coast Guard is on the frontline of this battle.

To help stop new attacks on our country, we've strengthened international cooperation in the fight against terror. A coalition of more than 90 nations—nearly one-half of the world—is working together to dry up terrorist financing and bring terrorist leaders to justice. We launched the Proliferation Security Initiative, a vast coalition of nations that are working to stop shipments of weapons of mass destruction on land, at sea, and in the air. With our allies, we have uncovered and shut down the A.Q. Khan network, which had supplied nuclear-related equipment and plans to terrorist states, including Iran and North Korea. With Great Britain, we convinced the leader of Libya to abandon his country's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. The key components of Libya's nuclear program are now locked up in a storage facility right here in the United States. And today the world is safer because Libya is out of the nuclear weapons business.

All these steps are making our country safer, but we're not yet safe. To strike our country, the terrorists only have to be right once; to protect our country, we have to be right 100 percent of the time. That means the best way to protect our people is to take the fight to the enemy. So after 9/11, I vowed to America that we would go on the offense against the terrorists, fighting them across the world so we do not have to face them here at home. And since 9/11, that is precisely what that United States of America has done.

In Afghanistan, we removed a regime that gave sanctuary and support to Al Qaida as they planned the 9/11 attacks. Today, because we acted, the terrorist camps in Afghanistan have been shut down, 25 million

people have been liberated, and the Afghan people have an elected Government that is fighting terrorists, instead of harboring them.

The Taliban and Al Qaida are seeking to roll back Afghanistan's democratic progress, but forces from 40 nations, including every member of NATO, are helping the Afghan people defend their democratic gains. Earlier this month, Afghan, American, and NATO forces tracked down and killed a top Taliban commander in Afghanistan. His death has sent a clear message to all who would challenge Afghanistan's young democracy: We drove Al Qaida and the Taliban out of power, and they're not going to be allowed to return to power.

In Iraq, we removed a cruel dictator who harbored terrorists, paid the families of Palestinian suicide bombers, invaded his neighbors, defied the United Nations Security Council, pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. Iraq, the United States, and the world are better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

And today, the Iraqi people are building a young democracy on the rubble of Saddam Hussein's tyranny. In December 2005, nearly 12 million Iraqis demonstrated their desire to be free, going to the polls and choosing a new Government under the most progressive, democratic Constitution in the Arab world.

In 2006, a thinking enemy responded to this progress and struck back with brutality. They staged sensational attacks that led to a tragic escalation of sectarian rage and reprisal. If the sectarian violence continued to spiral out of control, the Iraqi Government would have been in danger of collapse. The ensuing chaos would embolden Iran, which is fueling the violence, and Al Qaida, a key driver of Iraq's sectarian conflict. The chaos could eventually spread across the Middle East, and generations of Americans would be in even greater danger.

So I had a choice to make: withdraw our troops, or send reinforcements to help the Iraqis quell the sectarian violence. I decided to send more troops with a new mission: to help the Iraqi Government secure their population and get control of their capital city.

As we carry out the new strategy, the Iraqi Government has a lot of work to do. They

must meet its responsibility to the Iraqi people and achieve benchmarks it has set, including adoption of a national oil law, preparations for Provincial elections, progress on a new de-Ba'athification policy, and a review of the Iraqi Constitution. The Iraqi people must see that their Government is taking action to bring their country together and give all of Iraq's a stake in a peaceful future.

Now, in 2007, we are at a pivotal moment in this battle. There are many destructive forces in Iraq trying to stop this strategy from succeeding; the most destructive is Al Qaida. Al Qaida knows that a democratic Iraq is a threat to their ambitions to impose their hateful ideology across the Middle East. And Al Qaida knows that our presence in Iraq is a direct threat to their existence in Iraq. Our security depends on helping the Iraqis succeed and defeating Iraq—Al Qaida in Iraq.

Some in our country question whether the battle in Iraq is part of the war on terror. Among the terrorists, there's no doubt. Hear the words of Usama bin Laden. He calls the struggle in Iraq a "war of destiny." He proclaimed, "The war is for you or for us to win. If we win it, it means your defeat and disgrace forever."

Bin Laden is matching his words with action. He attempted to send a new commander to Iraq, an Iraqi-born terrorist named Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi. According to our intelligence community, this terrorist had been a senior adviser to bin Laden; he served as his top commander in Afghanistan; he was responsible for all Al Qaida's military operations against our coalition in that country. Abd al-Hadi never made it to Iraq. He was captured last year. He was recently transferred to the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay.

There is a reason that bin Laden sent one of his most experienced paramilitary leaders to Iraq. He believes that if Al Qaida can drive us out, they can establish Iraq as a new terrorist sanctuary. Our intelligence community believes that Al Qaida leaders see victory in Iraq—the heart of the caliphate and currently the most active front in their war—as a religious and strategic imperative. If Al Qaida succeeds in Iraq, they would pursue their stated goals of turning that nation into

a base from which to overthrow moderate governments in the region, impose their hateful ideology on millions, and launch new attacks on America and other nations. Victory in Iraq is important for Usama bin Laden, and victory in Iraq is vital for the United States of America.

I've often warned that if we fail in Iraq, the enemy will follow us home. Many ask, "How do you know?" Today I'd like to share some information with you that attests to Al Qaida's intentions. According to our intelligence community, in January 2005, Usama bin Laden tasked the terrorist Zarqawi, who was then Al Qaida's top leader in Iraq, with forming a cell to conduct terrorist attacks outside of Iraq. Bin Laden emphasized that America should be Zarqawi's number-one priority in terms of foreign attacks. Zarqawi welcomed this direction. He claimed that he had already come up with some good proposals.

To help Zarqawi in these efforts, our intelligence community reports that bin Laden then tasked one of his top terrorist operatives, Hamza Rabia, to send Zarqawi a briefing on Al Qaida's external operations, including information about operations against the American homeland. Our intelligence community reports that a senior Al Qaida leader, Abu Faraj al-Libi, went further and suggested that bin Laden actually send Rabia himself to Iraq to help plan external operations. Abu Faraj later speculated that if this effort proved successful, Al Qaida might one day prepare the majority of its external operations from Iraq.

In May of 2005, Abu Faraj was captured and taken into CIA custody. Several months later, in December 2005, Rabia was killed in Pakistan. Several months after that, in June of 2006, the terrorist Zarqawi was killed by American forces in Iraq. Successes like these are blows to Al Qaida. They're a testament to steps we have taken to strengthen our intelligence, work closely with partners overseas, and keep the pressure on the enemy by staying on the offense.

Despite our pressure, despite the setbacks that Al Qaida has suffered, it remains extremely dangerous. As we've surged our forces in Iraq, Al Qaida has responded with a surge of its own. The terrorists' goal in Iraq

is to reignite sectarian violence and break support for the war here at home. And they believe they're succeeding. A few weeks ago, Al Qaida's number two, second in command, Zawahiri, issued a video in which he gloated that Al Qaida's "movement of violence has forced the Americans to accept a pullout, about which they only differ in regard to its timing." We can expect Al Qaida to continue its campaign of high-profile attacks, including deadly suicide bombings and assassinations. And as they do, our troops will face more fighting and increased risks in the weeks and months ahead.

The fight in Iraq is tough, but my point today to you is, the fight is essential to our security. Al Qaida's leaders inside and outside of Iraq have not given up on their objective of attacking America again.

Now, many critics compare the battle in Iraq to the situation we faced in Vietnam. There are many differences between the two conflicts, but one stands out above all: The enemy in Vietnam had neither the intent nor the capability to strike our homeland; the enemy in Iraq does. Nine-Eleven taught us that to protect the American people, we must fight the terrorists where they live so that we don't have to fight them where we live.

The question for our elected leaders is, do we comprehend the danger of an Al Qaida victory in Iraq, and will we do what it takes to stop them? However difficult the fight in Iraq has become, we must win it. Al Qaida is public enemy number one for Iraq's young democracy. Al Qaida is public enemy number one for America as well. And that is why we must support our troops; we must support the Iraqi Government; and we must defeat Al Qaida in Iraq.

We're thankful to the military, the intelligence, and law enforcement personnel who work tirelessly to stop new attacks on our country. With every plot they foil, every terrorist they capture, we learn more about the enemy's plans and persistence. In the minds of Al Qaida leaders, 9/11 was just a downpayment on violence yet to come. It's tempting to believe that the calm here at home after September the 11th means that the danger to our country has passed. I see the intelligence every day. The danger has not passed. Here in America, we're living in the eye of



a storm. All around us, dangerous winds are swirling, and these winds could reach our shores at any moment.

The men and women of the Coast Guard know how to navigate the storm. We're counting on you to help America weather the challenges that lie ahead. As you begin your Coast Guard careers, you can approach the future with confidence because our Nation has faced dangerous enemies before and emerged victorious every time. Terrorists can try to kill the innocent, but they cannot kill the desire for liberty that burns in the hearts of millions across the Earth. The power of freedom defeated the ideologies of fascism and communism in the last century, and freedom will defeat the hateful ideologies of the terrorists in this century.

Victory in this struggle will require valor and determination and persistence, and these qualities can be found in abundance in the class of 2007. Your class has chosen a motto: Let Courage Part the Seas. America will be counting on your courage in the years to come. You will take your oath as Coast Guard officers in a time of war, knowing all the risks your service entails. I thank each of you for your bold decision to wear the uniform. My call to you is this: Trust in the power of freedom to overcome tyranny and terror; show leadership in freedom's defense and character in all you do; be ready for anything.

The Coasties who came before you never thought that they would be organizing a flotilla in New York Harbor or patrolling distant coasts in the Persian Gulf. Like them, you will serve in ways you cannot imagine today. But if you bring the skills and creativity you learned at this Academy to every task, our Nation's security will be in good hands.

You leave this Academy strong and resolved to be worthy of the traditions of commissioned officers in the United States Coast Guard. I respect your passion for service and the courage of your choice. Your country is grateful and proud of each of you. Congratulations. God bless. *Semper Paratus.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. in the Alumni Building. In his remarks, he referred to Rear Adm. J. Scott Burhoe, USCG, superintendent, and Chief Petty Officer Karl Dillmann, USCG, Delta Company Chief, U.S. Coast Guard Academy; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's

nuclear weapons program; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya.

## **Statement on the Energy Information Administration's Report**

*May 23, 2007*

I was pleased to receive the Energy Information Administration's report today, which includes its "flash estimate" of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions for 2006. The report shows that emissions declined 78 million metric tons over 2005, or 1.3 percent, while our economy grew 3.3 percent. That means CO<sub>2</sub> intensity decreased by 4.5 percent—the largest annual improvement since 1990—putting us well ahead of what is needed annually to meet my greenhouse gas intensity reduction goal of 18 percent by 2012.

In 2001, I outlined fundamental principles to guide a scientifically sound and effective effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2002, I committed this country to reduce our economy's greenhouse gas intensity—how much we emit per unit of the GDP—by 18 percent by 2012. Since then, we have moved forward with an effective climate change policy that is science-based, encourages research and investment in the technologies needed to solve the problem, and takes advantage of the power of markets.

We are effectively confronting the important challenge of global climate change through regulations, public-private partnerships, incentives, and strong economic investment. New policies at the Federal, State, and local levels—such as my initiative to reduce by 20 percent our projected use of gasoline within 10 years—promise even more progress. I have called on Congress to pass this legislation quickly, and I have also directed the EPA and the Departments of Transportation, Energy, and Agriculture to take the first steps toward regulations, using my 20-in-10 plan as a starting point. At the same time, we will continue to lead internationally through sensible partnerships promoting development and deployment of clean energy technologies, such as the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, which includes China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Australia.

## **The President's News Conference**

*May 24, 2007*

**The President.** Please be seated. Thank you all. Good morning.

Today Congress will vote on legislation that provides our troops with the funds they need. It makes clear that our Iraqi partners must demonstrate progress on security and reconciliation. My administration and Members of Congress from both parties have had many meetings to work out our differences on this legislation. As a result, we've removed the arbitrary timetables for withdrawal and the restrictions on our military commanders that some in Congress had supported.

We were also successful in removing billions of—in unrelated domestic spending that many of the Democrats were insisting on. I wanted to remove even more. But, still, by voting for this bill, members of both parties can show our troops and the Iraqis and the enemy that our country will support our service men and women in harm's way.

As it provides vital funds for our troops, this bill also reflects a consensus that the Iraqi Government needs to show real progress in return for America's continued support and sacrifice. The Iraqi Study Group—the Iraq Study Group recommended that we hold the Iraqi Government to the series of benchmarks for improved security, political reconciliation, and governance that the Iraqis had set for themselves. I agree; so does the Congress. And the bill reflects that recommendation.

These benchmarks provide both the Iraqi Government and the American people with a clear roadmap on the way forward. Meeting these benchmarks will be difficult; it's going to be hard work for this young Government. After all, the Iraqis are recovering from decades of brutal dictatorship. Their democratic Government is just over a year old. And as they're making tough decisions about their future, they're under relentless attack from extremists and radicals who are trying to bring down the young democracy.

Our new strategy is designed to help Iraq's leaders provide security for their people and get control of their capital so they can move forward with reconciliation and reconstruction. Our new strategy is designed to take

advantage of new opportunities to partner with local tribes to go after Al Qaida in places like Anbar, which has been the home base of Al Qaida in Iraq.

This summer is going to be a critical time for the new strategy. The last of five reinforcement brigades we are sending to Iraq is scheduled to arrive in Baghdad by mid-June. As these reinforcements carry out their missions, the enemies of a free Iraq, including Al Qaida and illegal militias, will continue to bomb and murder in an attempt to stop us. We're going to expect heavy fighting in the weeks and months. We can expect more American and Iraqi casualties. We must provide our troops with the funds and resources they need to prevail.

Another important issue before Congress is immigration reform. I want to thank the bipartisan group of Senators who produced a bill that will help us secure our borders and reform our immigration system. For decades, the Government failed to stop illegal immigration. My administration has stepped up efforts to improve border security, doubling the number of Border Patrol agents. We've effectively ended the policy of catch-and-release, which allowed some illegal immigrants to be released back into society after they were captured. Last year alone, we apprehended more than a million people trying to enter this country illegally. This is progress, but it's not enough.

Many Americans are rightly skeptical about immigration reform. I strongly believe the bipartisan Senate bill addresses the reasons for past failures, while recognizing the legitimate needs of our economy and upholding the ideals of our immigrant tradition.

This bill does not grant amnesty. Amnesty is forgiveness without a penalty. Instead, this bill requires workers here illegally to acknowledge that they broke the law, pay a fine, pass background checks, remain employed, and maintain a clean record. This bill provides the best chance to reform our immigration system and help us make certain we know who's in our country and where they are.

Our immigration problems cannot be solved piecemeal. They must be all addressed together, and they must be addressed in logical order. So this legislation requires that

border security and worker-verification targets are met before other provisions of the bill are triggered. For example, the temporary-worker program can begin only after these security measures are fully implemented. Immigration reform is a complex issue; it's a difficult piece of legislation. And those who are looking to find fault with this bill will always be able to find something. But if you're serious about securing our borders and bringing millions of illegal immigrants in our country out of the shadows, this bipartisan bill is the best opportunity to move forward. I'm confident, with hard work and good will, Congress can pass and I can sign a bill that fixes an immigration system we all agree is broken.

The issues of war and immigration are difficult, but that's no excuse in avoiding our responsibility to act. The American people sent us to Washington to take on tough problems, and they expect us to deliver results.

And now I'll be glad to answer some of your questions. Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

#### ***Iran/Nuclear Weapons Nonproliferation Efforts***

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. The IAEA says that Iran has significantly accelerated its uranium enrichment program. And today President Ahmadi-nejad said that he would go ahead—he vowed to go ahead. There also is the detention of three Iranian Americans. Where is this all headed? And do you think it's time for tough U.N. sanctions with real teeth, and are you confident that Russia and China would go ahead?

**The President.** As you know, we have been discussing this issue a lot at these press avails. Iran is constantly on the agenda at a press avail like this—or a press conference like this, and the reason why is, is because they continue to be defiant as to the demands of the free world. The world has spoken and said, no nuclear weapons programs. And yet they're constantly ignoring the demands.

My view is that we need to strengthen our sanction regime. I just spoke to Condoleezza Rice, and we will work with our European partners to develop further sanctions. And, of course, I will discuss this issue with Vladimir Putin as well as President Hu Jintao.

The first thing that these leaders have got to understand is that an Iran with a nuclear weapon would be incredibly destabilizing for the world. It's in their interests that we work collaboratively to continue to isolate that regime.

I'm sympathetic for the people of Iran. I'm sorry they live under a Government that continues to insist upon a program that the world has condemned, because it is denying the good people of Iran economic opportunities that they would have. This is a country with a great tradition and a great history. There are hard-working people in that country that want to benefit from a society that is more open, and yet the Government insists upon measures that will lead to further isolation. And, therefore, to answer one part of your question, we will work with our partners to continue the pressure.

Secondly, obviously, to the extent that these people are picking up innocent Americans, it's unacceptable. And we've made it very clear to the Iranian Government that the detention of good, decent American souls who are there to be beneficial citizens is not acceptable behavior.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters].

#### ***U.S. Soldiers Missing in Iraq/War on Terror in Iraq***

**Q.** Mr. President, dozens of American troops have been killed this month, and sectarian violence appears to be rising again in Iraq. And you yourself just said that you're expecting more casualties in the weeks and months ahead. How much longer do you believe you can sustain your current policy in Iraq without significant progress on the ground? And how confident are you about finding those missing soldiers?

**The President.** I'm confident that the military is doing everything it can to find the missing soldiers. I talked to General Petraeus about this subject and Secretary Gates. And General Petraeus informs him that we're using all the intelligence and all the troops we can find—to find them. It's a top priority of our people there in Iraq.

Obviously, the loss of life is—it is devastating to families. I fully understand that. But I want to remind you as to why I sent more troops in. It was to help stabilize the

capital. You're asking me, "How much longer?" We have yet to even get all our troops in place. General David Petraeus laid out a plan for the Congress. He talked about a strategy all aiming—all aimed at helping this Iraqi Government secure its capital so that they can do the—some of the political work necessary, the hard work necessary to reconcile.

And as I explained in my opening remarks, all the troops won't be there until mid-June. And one reason you're seeing more fighting is because our troops are going into new areas, along with the Iraqis. And so General Petraeus has said, "Why don't you give us until September, and let me report back," to not only me but to the United States Congress, "about progress?"

I would like to see us in a different configuration at some point in time in Iraq. However, it's going to require taking control of the capital. And the best way to do that was to follow the recommendations of General Petraeus. As I have constantly made clear, the recommendations of Baker-Hamilton appeal to me, and that is to be embedded and to train and to guard the territorial integrity of the country and to have Special Forces to chase down Al Qaida. But I didn't think we could get there unless we increased the troop levels to secure the capital. I was fearful that violence would spiral out of control in Iraq and that this experience of trying to help this democracy would—couldn't succeed.

And so therefore, the decisions I made are all aimed at getting us to a different position. And the timing of which will be decided by the commanders on the ground, not politicians here in Washington.

Chen [Ed Chen, Los Angeles Times]. Ed, excuse me. That's Henry [Ed Henry, Cable News Network]. Chen. Now you're coming down there—no, sorry. Work the print people a little bit, see. I've got the strategy—print. Ed, sorry.

### **Trade With China**

**Q.** Good morning, Mr. President. A lot of lawmakers in Congress are saying that China has not done enough to allow its currency to appreciate, and they're talking about things like duties. What is your view about

that, and are you prepared to do more to encourage the appreciation of the yuan?

**The President.** Thanks, Ed. I spoke to Madam Wu Yi today, as a matter of fact, had her into the Oval Office—wanted to thank her for bringing her delegation in and also to ask her to pass on a message to Hu Jintao that I appreciate his willingness to work in a strategic—with strategic dialogs in order to put in place the type of measures that reflect a complex relationship—in other words, the ability to discuss issues such as beef or intellectual property rights.

And one of the issues that I emphasized to Madam Wu Yi, as well as the delegation, was, was that we're watching very carefully as to whether or not they will appreciate their currency. And that's all in the context of making it clear to China that we value our relationship, but the \$233 billion trade deficit must be addressed. And one way to address it is through currency evaluations.

Another way to address it is for them to help convert their economy from one of savers to consumers. And that's why Secretary Paulson worked very assiduously with this strategic dialog group to encourage openness for capital markets; that China must open its capital markets to allow for different financial institutions from around the world to go into the country. It not only will be beneficial to the United States, but we happen to think it will be beneficial to the Chinese economy, for the consumers to have different options when it comes to savings and purchases.

And so this is a important dialog, and it's one that I thank the Chinese Government for engaging in. And there's been some progress. Yesterday they opened new air routes. That's beneficial for U.S. airlines. It also happens to be beneficial for China, as far I am concerned. It's beneficial for that country to open up its access to more travelers, whether they be business or tourists.

Anyway, this is a complex relationship. And there's a lot of areas where we're working together, and there's areas where there's friction. And we've just got to work through the friction. One area where I've been disappointed is beef. They need to be eating U.S. beef. It's good for them. They'll like it. And so we're working hard to get that beef market opened up.

Ed.

### **War on Terror**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. A new Senate report this morning contends that your administration was warned before the war that by invading Iraq, you would actually give Iran and Al Qaida a golden opportunity to expand their influence, the kind of influence you were talking about with Al Qaida yesterday and with Iran this morning. Why did you ignore those warnings, sir?

**The President.** Ed, going into Iraq, we were warned about a lot of things, some of which happened, some of which didn't happen. And, obviously, as I made a decision of—as consequential as that, I weighed the risks and rewards of any decision. I firmly believe the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. I know the Iraqis are better off without Saddam Hussein in power. I think America is safer without Saddam Hussein in power.

As to Al Qaida in Iraq, Al Qaida is going to fight us wherever we are. See, that's their strategy. Their strategy is to drive us out of the Middle East. They have made it abundantly clear what they want. They want to establish a caliphate. They want to spread their ideology. And they want safe haven from which to launch attacks. They're willing to kill the innocent to achieve their objectives, and they will fight us. And the fundamental question is, will we fight them? I have made the decision to do so. I believe that the best way to protect us in this war on terror is to fight them.

And so we're fighting them in Iraq; we're fighting them in Afghanistan; we've helped the Philippines fight—Philippine Government fight them. We're fighting them. And this notion about how this isn't a war on terror, in my view, is naive. It doesn't reflect the true nature of the world in which we live.

You know, the lessons of September the 11th are these: We've got to stay on the offense; we've got to bring these people to justice before they hurt again; and, at the same time, defeat their ideology with a ideology based upon liberty. And that's what you're seeing, and they're resisting it.

I think it ought to be illustrative to the American people that Al Qaida is trying to

stop new democracies from evolving. And what does—that should that tell you? That ought to tell you that we're dealing with people that have an ideology that is opposite of liberty and will take whatever measures are necessary to prevent this young democracy from succeeding.

The danger in this particular theater in the war on terror is that if we were to fail, they'd come and get us. And, you know, I look at these reports right here in the Oval Office. For people who say that we're not under threat, they simply do not know the world. We are under threat. And it's in our interest to pursue this enemy.

Martha [Martha Raddatz, ABC News].

### **Government of Iraq/U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. You say you want nothing short of victory, that leaving Iraq would be catastrophic. You once again mentioned Al Qaida. Does that mean that you are willing to leave American troops there, no matter what the Iraqi Government does? I know this is a question we've asked before, but you can begin it with a yes or no.

**The President.** We are there at the invitation of the Iraqi Government. This is a sovereign nation. Twelve million people went to the polls to approve a Constitution. It's their Government's choice. If they were to say, "Leave," we would leave.

**Q.** [Inaudible]—results would be catastrophic, as you've said over and over again?

**The President.** I would hope that they would recognize that the results would be catastrophic. But this is a sovereign nation, Martha. We are there at their request. And hopefully the Iraqi Government would be wise enough to recognize that without coalition troops, particularly U.S. troops, that they would endanger their very existence. And it's why we work very closely with them, to make sure that the realities are such that they wouldn't make that request. But if they were to make the request, we wouldn't be there.

David [David Gregory, NBC News].

### **War on Terror/Threat of Further Terrorist Attacks**

**Q.** Mr. President, after the mistakes that have been made in this war, when you do as you did yesterday, where you raised 2-year-old intelligence, talking about the threat posed by Al Qaida, it's met with increasing skepticism. The majority in the public, a growing number of Republicans appear not to trust you any longer to be able to carry out this policy successfully. Can you explain why you believe you're still a credible messenger on the war?

**The President.** I'm credible because I read the intelligence, David, and make it abundantly clear in plain terms that if we let up, we'll be attacked. And I firmly believe that.

Look, this has been a long, difficult experience for the American people. I can assure you, Al Qaida, who would like to attack us again, have got plenty of patience and persistence. And the question is, will we?

Yes, I talked about intelligence yesterday. I wanted to make sure the intelligence I laid out was credible, so we took our time. Somebody said, well, he's trying to politicize the thing. If I was trying to politicize it, I'd have dropped it out before the 2006 elections. I believe I have an obligation to tell the truth to the American people as to the nature of the enemy. And it's unpleasant for some. I fully recognize that after 9/11, in the calm here at home, relatively speaking, caused some to say, well, maybe we're not at war. I know that's a comfortable position to be in, but that's not the truth.

Failure in Iraq will cause generations to suffer, in my judgment. Al Qaida will be emboldened. They will say, yes, once again, we've driven the great, soft America out of a part of the region. It will cause them to be able to recruit more. It will give them safe haven. They are a direct threat to the United States.

And I'm going to keep talking about it. That's my job as the President, is to tell people the threats we face and what we're doing about it. And what we've done about it is, we've strengthened our homeland defenses. We've got new techniques that we use that enable us to better determine their motives and their plans and plots. We're working with

nations around the world to deal with these radicals and extremists. But they're dangerous, and I can't put it any more plainly—they're dangerous. And we will—and I can't put it any more plainly to the American people and to them—we will stay on the offense.

It's better to fight them there than here. And this concept about, well, maybe let us kind of just leave them alone, and maybe they'll be all right is naive. These people attacked us before we were in Iraq. They viciously attacked us before we were in Iraq, and they've been attacking ever since. They are a threat to your children, David, and whoever is in that Oval Office better understand it and take measures necessary to protect the American people.

**Q.** So what about—[inaudible].

**The President.** Axelrod [Jim Axelrod, CBS News].

### **U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to ask you about the Petraeus report, which, as you say, will be in September and report on progress. Doesn't setting up the September date give the enemy exactly what you've said you don't want them to have, which is a date to focus on, and doesn't it guarantee a bloody August?

And while I have you, sir, the phrase you just used, "a different configuration in Iraq" that you'd like to see, is that a plan B?

**The President.** Well, see, actually, I would call that a plan recommended by Baker-Hamilton, so that would be a plan BH. I've stated—you didn't like it? [Laughter] Okay.

I've stated, this is an idea that—I like the concept. The question is, could we get there given the violence last fall? And the answer, in my judgment, was, no, we would never be able to configure our troops that way, in that configuration—place our troops in that configuration given the violence inside the capital city.

David Petraeus felt like that it was important to tell the White House and tell the Congress that he would come back with an assessment in September. It's his decision to give the assessment, and I respect him, and I support him.

**Q.** Doesn't it give the terrorists a——

**The President.** It does; precisely. It's going to make—it could make August a tough month, because you see, what they're going to try to do is kill as many innocent people as they can to try to influence the debate here at home. Don't you find that interesting? I do—that they recognize that the death of innocent people could shake our will, could undermine David Petraeus's attempt to create a more stable Government. They will do anything they can to prevent success. And the reason why is, Al Qaida fully understands that if we retreat, they then are able to have another safe haven, in their mind.

Yesterday, in my speech, I quoted quotes from Usama bin Laden. And the reason I did was—is that I want the American people to hear what he has to say—not what I say, what he says. And in my judgment, we ought to be taking the words of the enemy seriously.

And so, yes, it could be a bloody—it could be a very difficult August. And I fully understand——

**Q.** [*Inaudible*—fighting the Democrats on that in the Senate about a date——

**The President.** Yes, David Petraeus, the commander—look, do you want politicians making those decisions, or do you want commanders on the ground making the decisions? My point is, is that I would trust David Petraeus to make an assessment and a recommendation a lot better than people in the United States Congress. And that's precisely the difference.

Michael [Michael Abramowitz, Washington Post].

#### **Justice Department/Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales**

**Q.** Good morning, Mr. President. I'd like to ask you about the Justice Department. In the last couple months, we have heard disturbing evidence about senior officials of the Justice Department misleading Congress. We heard disturbing evidence yesterday that a senior official at Justice Department improperly took, by her own admission, political considerations into effect in evaluating career employees of the Justice Department.

We've also had evidence from the former Deputy Attorney General of the White

House strong-arming a sick man into trying to approve an illegal spying program. I'm curious, Mr. President, if you are concerned about the cumulative picture that's being drawn about your Justice Department? And what assurances can you give the American people that the Department is delivering impartial justice to the American people?

**The President.** Yes, thank you, Michael. There is a—an internal investigation taking place at the Justice Department. And this will be an exhaustive investigation. And if there's wrongdoing, it will be taken care of.

I thought it was interesting how you started your question, “over the months.” I think you said, “over the last months.” This investigation is taking a long time, kind of being drug out. I suspect for political question—for political reasons. In other words, as I mentioned the other day, it's just grand political theater.

Attorney General Gonzales has testified. He's produced documents. And I would hope the Senate and the Congress would move expeditiously to finish their hearings and get on to the business of passing legislation that is meaningful for the country. But if there had been wrongdoing, that will be addressed, the way we'd hope it would be.

**Q.** [*Inaudible*—confidence. Are you——

**The President.** Yes, I've got confidence in Al Gonzales doing the job. Bret [Bret Baier, FOX News].

#### **War on Terror/Progress in Iraq**

**Q.** Mr. President, are you surprised by reports today from the Iraqis that sectarian killings are actually on the rise to pre-troop-surge levels? And, if I may, yesterday after your speech, Senator Joe Biden said Al Qaida in Iraq is a “Bush-fulfilling prophecy.” They weren't there before; now they're there. He said U.S. troops should get out of the middle of a civil war and fight Al Qaida. Can you respond to that?

**The President.** We are fighting Al Qaida in Iraq. A lot of the spectaculars you're seeing are caused by Al Qaida. Al Qaida will fight us wherever we are. That's what they do. That's what they've said they want to do. They have objectives. These are ideologues driven by a vision of the world that we must defeat. And you defeat them on the one hand

by hunting them down and bringing them to justice, and you defeat them on the other hand by offering a different alternative form of government.

The Middle East looked nice and cozy for a while. Everything looked fine on the surface, but beneath the surface, there was a lot of resentment, there was a lot of frustration, such that 19 kids got on airplanes and killed 3,000 Americans. It's in the long-term interest of this country to address the root causes of these extremists and radicals exploiting people that cause them to kill themselves and kill Americans and others.

I happen to believe one way to do that is to address the forms of government under which people live. Democracy is really difficult work, but democracy has proven to help change parts of the world from cauldrons of frustration to areas of hope. And we will continue to pursue this form of policy; it's in our national interest we do so.

What other aspect of the question?

**Q.** [Inaudible]

**The President.** Yes, I'm—there's—certainly, there's been an uptick in violence. It's a snapshot; it's a moment. And David Petraeus will come back with his assessment, after his plan has been fully implemented, and give us a report as to what he recommends—what he sees, and what he recommends, which is, I think, a lot more credible than what Members of Congress recommend. We want our commanders making the recommendations, and—along with Ryan Crocker, our Ambassador there—I don't want to leave Ryan out.

And so it's a—you know, to Axelrod's point, it's a—no question it's the kind of report that the enemy would like to affect because they want us to leave. They want us out of there. And the reason they want us to leave is because they have objectives that they want to accomplish. Al Qaida—David Petraeus called Al Qaida public enemy number one in Iraq. I agree with him. And Al Qaida is public enemy number one in America. It seems like to me that if they're public enemy number one here, we want to help defeat them in Iraq.

This is a tough fight, you know? And it's, obviously, it's had an effect on the American people. Americans—a lot of Americans want

to know win—when are you going to win? Victory is—victory will come when that country is stable enough to be able to be an ally in the war on terror and to govern itself and defend itself.

One of the things that appealed to me about the Baker-Hamilton is that it will provide a—kind of a long-term basis for that likely to happen, assuming the Iraqi Government invites us to stay there. I believe this is an area where we can find common ground with Democrats and Republicans, by the way. I fully recognize there are a group of Democrats who say, "Get out of the deal now. It's just not worth it."

One of the areas where I really believe we need more of a national discussion, however, is, what would be the consequences of failure in Iraq? See, people have got to understand that if that government were to fall, the people would tend to divide into kind of sectarian enclaves, much more so than today, that would invite Iranian influence and would invite Al Qaida influence, much more so than in Iraq today. That would then create enormous turmoil—or could end up creating enormous turmoil in the Middle East, which would have a direct effect on the security of the United States.

Failure in Iraq affects the security of this country. It's hard for some Americans to see that—I fully understand it. I see it clearly. I believe this is the great challenge of the beginning of the 21st century—not just Iraq, but dealing with this radical, ideological movement in a way that secures us in the short term and more likely secures us in the long term.

Jim [Jim Rutenberg, New York Times]. You didn't nod off there, did you? [Laughter] A little hot out here in the Rose Garden for you? [Laughter]

### **Usama bin Laden/Threat of Further Terrorist Attacks**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** Yes, well, go ahead and take the tie off. I'm halfway done anyway. [Laughter]

**Q.** Mr. President, yesterday you discussed Usama bin Laden's plans to turn Iraq into a terrorist sanctuary. What do you think your own reaction would have been 5 years ago



had you been told that towards the end of your term, he would still be at large with that kind of capability, from Iraq, no less, and why—can you tell the American people—is he still on the run? Why is he so hard to catch?

**The President.** I would say that 5 years ago, like I said, we're going to pursue him, and we are pursuing him. And he's hiding. He is in a remote region of the world. If I knew precisely where he is, we would take the appropriate action to bring him to justice. He is attempting to establish a base of operations in Iraq. He hasn't established a base in operations. My points yesterday were, here was his intentions, but thankfully, of the three people I named, all of them no longer are a part of his operation.

My point is, is that—I was making the point, Jim, as I'm sure you recognized, that if we leave, they follow us. And my point was, was that Usama bin Laden was establishing an external cell there, or trying to. And he's been unable to do it—precisely my point. That's why we've got to stay engaged. Had he been able to establish an internal cell that had safe haven, we would be a lot more in danger today than we are. His organization is a risk. We will continue to pursue as hard as we possibly can. We will do everything we can to bring him and others to justice.

We have had good success in the chief operating officer position of Al Qaida. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Ramzi al Rabium—there's a lot of names, some of whom I mentioned yesterday, that are no longer a threat to the United States. We will continue to work to bring him to justice—that's exactly what the American people expect us to do—and in the meantime, use the tools we put in place to protect this homeland.

We are under threat. Some may say, well, he's just saying that to get people to pay attention to him, or try to scare them into—for some reason. I would hope our world hadn't become so cynical that they don't take the threats of Al Qaida seriously, because they're real. And it's a danger to the American people. It's a danger to your children, Jim. And it's really important that we do all we can do to bring them to justice.

**Q.** Mr. President, why is he still at large?

**The President.** Why is he at large? Because we haven't got him yet, Jim. That's why. And he's hiding, and we're looking, and we will continue to look until we bring him to justice. We've brought a lot of his buddies to justice, but not him. That's why he's still at large. He's not out there traipsing around. He's not leading many parades, however. He's not out feeding the hungry. He's isolated, trying to kill people to achieve his objective.

Those are his words—his objectives are his words, not mine. He has made it clear—he and Zawahiri, their number two, have made it clear what they want. And in a war against extremists and radicals like these, we ought to be listening carefully to what they say. We ought to take their words seriously. There have been moments in history where others haven't taken the words of people seriously, and they suffered. So, I'm taking them seriously.

Yes, Jim [Jim Gerstenzang, Los Angeles Times].

### **Former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq**

**Q.** Mr. President, moments ago you said that Al Qaida attacked us before we were in Iraq. Since then Iraq has become much less stable; Al Qaida has used it as a recruiting tool, apparently with some success. So what would you say to those who would argue that what we've done in Iraq has simply enhanced Al Qaida and made the situation worse?

**The President.** Oh, so, in other words, the option would have been just let Saddam Hussein stay there? Your question is, should we not have left Saddam Hussein in power? And the answer is, absolutely not. Saddam Hussein was an enemy of the United States. He'd attacked his neighbors. He was paying Palestinian suicide bombers. He would have been—if he were to defy—and by the way, cheating on the U.N. oil for sanctions program—Oil-for-Food Programme. No, I don't buy it. I don't buy that this world would be a better place with Saddam Hussein in power, and particularly if—and I'm sure the Iraqis would agree with that.

See, that's the kind of attitude—he says, okay, let's let them live under a tyrant, and

I just don't agree. I obviously thought he had weapons; he didn't have weapons; the world thought he had weapons. It was a surprise to me that he didn't have the weapons of mass destruction everybody thought he had, but he had the capacity at some point in time to make weapons. It would have been a really dangerous world if we had the Iranians trying to develop a nuclear weapon, and Saddam Hussein competing for a nuclear weapon. You can imagine what the mentality of the Middle East would have been like.

So the heart of your question is, shouldn't you have left Saddam Hussein in power? And the answer is, no. And now that we've—

**Q.** [Inaudible]

**The President.** —well, that's really the crux of it. And—let me finish, please, here. I'm on a roll here. And so now that we have, does it make sense to help this young democracy survive? And the answer is, yes, for a variety of reasons.

One, we want to make sure that this enemy that did attack us doesn't establish a safe haven from which to attack again. Two, the ultimate success in a war against ideologies is to offer a different ideology, one based upon liberty—by the way, embraced by 12 million people when given the chance. Thirdly, our credibility is at stake in the Middle East. There's a lot of Middle Eastern nations wondering whether the United States of America is willing to push back against radicals and extremists, no matter what their religion base—religious bases may be.

And so the stakes are high in Iraq. I believe they're absolutely necessary for the security of this country. The consequences of failure are immense.

Yes.

**Q.** So there was no choice—so there was no choice between the course we took and leaving Saddam Hussein in power? Nothing else that might have worked?

**The President.** Well, we tried other things. As you might remember back then, we tried the diplomatic route: 1441 was a unanimous vote in the Security Council that said disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. So, the choice was his to make. And he made—he made a choice that has subsequently left—subsequently caused him to lose his life under a system that he

wouldn't have given his own citizens. We tried diplomacy. As a matter of fact, not only did I try diplomacy; other Presidents tried diplomacy.

Let's see here. John [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

### **Legislative Priorities/Immigration Reform**

**Q.** Thanks, Mr. President. You've said many times that you plan to sprint to the finish of your Presidency. At this point in the home stretch, what can you say you're still expecting to accomplish? And how concerned are you that the immigration bill in particular is going to get caught up in electoral politics?

**The President.** Yes, thanks. Well, we need to pass additional energy legislation. We need to renew No Child Left Behind. Get these trade bills out of Congress—the trade bills on Panama and Peru and Colombia, hopefully work toward a free trade—further the work we've done on the Korean free trade agreement. Hopefully I'll be able to bring back successful negotiations on Doha for a congressional vote which will require a TPA extension and/or—a TPA extension, there's no “and/or” to it. Making sure that this progress on balancing the budget continues. The deficit is—I know you're following the numbers, John—the deficit is reduced more than anticipated as a result of increased tax revenues coming in and the fiscal measures that we took. And now we're going to have to work with Congress to make sure they don't overspend and make sure they don't raise the taxes on the people as well.

Running up the taxes will hurt this economy, which would hurt the revenues to the Treasury. I'm deeply concerned about the Democratic budget that is classic tax and spend. I'm looking forward to seeing how they intend to keep their promise of balancing this budget in 5 years.

A big—and of course, fighting this war on terror is a huge issue. I obviously would like to find common ground on how to proceed in Iraq, with Democrats and Republicans. I recognize there are a handful there or some who just say, “Get out; it's just not worth it; let's just leave.” I strongly disagree with

that attitude. Most Americans do as well. And the vote showed that what's possible when we work together, the vote—the pending vote today showed what's possible when we work together, when Republicans and Democrats work together. There's a good group of Republicans that want to work with Democrats. They just don't want to accept something that they don't agree with.

Immigration—this is a tough issue. This is a very emotional, hard issue for members of both parties. I've always been a believer that comprehensive immigration reform is the best way to secure our border. I campaigned on that for President twice. I believed it when I was the Governor of Texas. I understand this issue very well. I also understand the frustrations of many citizens in that they believe the government hasn't done its job of stopping illegal migrants from coming into the country.

And that's why over the past couple of years there's been a significant effort to secure the border. There's going to be a doubling of the Border Patrol agents; there's going to be fencing and berms and different types of equipment to help the Border Patrol do its job in a better way. As a matter of fact, I was concerned about it enough to ask the National Guard to go down there for a while.

But, John, I don't see—and so those concerns, by the way, are addressed in this bill. The bill essentially says that before any other reforms take place, certain benchmarks will be met when it comes to securing the border. Last year, during the debate, people said, well, let's have security first. That's exactly what the bill does.

However, I don't see how you can have the border security the American people expect unless you have a temporary-worker program, with a verifiable work card. People will come here to do work to feed their families, and they'll figure out ways to do so. As a result of people wanting to come here to do work to feed their families, there is an underground industry that has sprung up that I think is essentially anti-humanitarian. It is an industry based upon *coyotes*—those are smugglers. Good, hard-working, decent people pay pretty good size money to be smuggled into the United States of America.

There is a document forgery industry in America. There are people who are willing to stuff people inside temporary shelter in order for them to evade the law. I don't think this is American. I think the whole industry that exploits the human being is not in our Nation's interests. And the best way to deal with this problem is to say, if you're going to come and do jobs Americans aren't doing, here is a opportunity to do so, on a temporary basis. I would much rather have people crossing the border with a legitimate card, coming to work on a temporary basis, than being stuffed in the back of an 18-wheeler. And I would hope most Americans feel that as well.

Secondly, in order for there to be good employer verification—it's against the law to hire somebody who is here illegally, but many times small businesses or large are presented with documents, and they don't know whether they're real or not. And so, therefore, we must have a tamper-proof identification card, which is a part of this bill.

A tough issue, of course, is what do you do with the people already here? Anything short of kicking them out, as far as some people are concerned, is called amnesty. You can't kick them out. Anybody who advocates trying to dig out 12 million people who have been in our society for a while is sending a signal to the American people that's just not real. It's an impractical solution. Nor do I think they ought to be given automatic citizenship; that is amnesty: Okay, you're here illegally; therefore you're automatically a citizen.

And so, therefore, we proposed and worked with the Senate to devise a plan that said, if you're here already before a certain date, that there are certain hurdles you must cross in order to receive what's called a Z visa, in order to be able to work here. You've got to go through a background check; you've got to pay a fine at some point in time; there's a probationary period. And there's a series of steps that people have to go through, and then people get at the back of the line, the citizenship line, not the beginning of the citizenship line.

If you're for the bill, I thank you. If you're against it, you can find every reason in the world to be against a comprehensive bill. It's

easy to find something to be against in this bill. All it takes is to take one little aspect of it and ignore the comprehensive nature and how good it is.

I knew this was going to be an explosive issue. It's easy to hold up somebody who is here and working hard as a political target. I would like to get this bill done for a lot of reasons. I'd like to get it done because it's the right thing to do. I'd like to get it done because I happen to believe the approach that is now being discussed in the Senate is an approach that will actually solve the problem. I'd like to get it out of politics. I don't think it's good to be, you know, holding people up. We've been through immigration debates in this country, and they can bring out the worst, sometimes, in people. We're a land of immigrants.

I was touched yesterday when the kid from the Coast Guard Academy, ensign, now ensign talked about his migrant grandfather from Mexico. And here's this guy, this man standing up in front of the President of the United States and his class, talking about serving America. He wasn't—you know, his grandfather wasn't born here. I don't know what job he did; I suspect it was probably manual labor. I don't know; I didn't ask him.

But I do know he spoke with pride. I do know he represents the best about what immigration can mean for America. You know, welcoming people here who want to work and realize the American Dream renews our spirit and soul. It's been the case throughout generations. And we have an opportunity to put a good law in place now—right now. And it's going to be hard work. And sure, politics will get involved. But the question is, will Members of Congress rise above politics? I will. It's the right thing to have a comprehensive bill.

And so I'm going to continue to reach out to Members of Congress from both parties and call upon them to take the lead and show the political courage necessary to get the bill to my desk as quickly as possible.

I want to thank you for your interest.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:01 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia; President Hu Jintao and Vice Premier Wu Yi of China; Gen. David

Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, cochairs, Iraq Study Group; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. Reporters referred to former Department of Justice official Monica M. Goodling; former Deputy Attorney General James B. Comey; and former Attorney General John Ashcroft.

### **Statement on the Nomination of James W. Holsinger, Jr., To Be Surgeon General**

*May 24, 2007*

Today I have announced my intention to nominate James W. Holsinger, Jr., to serve as the 18th Surgeon General of the United States. Dr. Holsinger is an accomplished physician who has led one of our Nation's largest health care systems, the State of Kentucky's health care system, and the University of Kentucky's Medical Center. He also has taught at several American medical schools, and he served more than three decades in the United States Army Reserve, retiring in 1993 as a Major General.

As America's chief health educator, he will be charged with providing the best scientific information available on how Americans can make smart choices that improve their health and reduce their risk of illness and injury. Dr. Holsinger will particularly focus his efforts on educating parents and children about childhood obesity, a serious epidemic that decreases quality of life and burdens our health care system. I am confident that Dr. Holsinger will help our Nation confront this challenge and many others to ensure that Americans live longer, better, and healthier lives.

### **Remarks Following a Visit With Wounded Troops and Their Families at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland**

*May 25, 2007*

First, I applaud the bipartisan effort to get a emergency supplemental bill to my desk. The Speaker and the leader said they would

get it done by Memorial Day recess, and they have, and I appreciate that very much.

You know, this effort shows what can happen when people work together. We set a good bill that didn't have timetables or tell the military how to do its job, but also sent a clear signal to the Iraqis that there's expectations here in America, expectations that we expect—about how to move forward. I look forward to continuing to work with the Prime Minister and his Government in meeting those expectations.

I also am honored to be here at this place of compassion and healing on Memorial Day weekend. It's a weekend which gives us a chance to honor those who have served this country, whether it be in this war or in previous wars.

In being here, I also want to honor the healers here at Bethesda. It's—health care here is remarkable. They're dealing with some of the very tragic injuries in this war. People come here without much hope, and they leave, in many cases, healed and ready to move on with their lives. So I thank the doctors and the nurses.

I also thank the soldiers and their families who I met here, people who are remarkably brave and courageous. I'm constantly amazed at the strength of character of those who wear the uniform. To be the Commander and Chief of such men and women is really an awesome honor.

And so to our troops and their families, may God bless you. And may God continue to bless our country.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

## **Proclamation 8149—Great Outdoors Month, 2007**

*May 25, 2007*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

### **A Proclamation**

During Great Outdoors Month, we celebrate the rich blessings of our Nation's natural beauty, and we renew our commitment

to protecting our environment so that we can leave our children and grandchildren a healthy and flourishing land. This month is also an opportunity to pay tribute to those whose hard work and dedication keep our country's open spaces beautiful and accessible to our citizens.

Through recreational activities such as fishing, skiing, biking, and nature watching, we can teach our young people about the wonders of our Nation's landscapes. Experiencing our Nation's natural splendor contributes to healthier lives for our citizens and a deeper appreciation for the great outdoors.

My Administration is working to protect and conserve our natural wonders for future generations. To keep our National Park System vibrant, we requested the highest increase ever in park operations funding in the FY 2008 Budget and launched the National Parks Centennial Initiative. We are also promoting responsible stewardship and conservation of our air, water, and land. Harmful air pollutants are down more than 10 percent since 2001, but there is more work to be done. Through the "Twenty in Ten" plan, my Administration aims to limit greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles and reduce America's dependence on oil by cutting our gasoline usage by 20 percent over the next 10 years.

In addition, we have restored, improved, or protected millions of acres of wetlands and enhanced our parks and wildlife refuges. We are also encouraging cooperative conservation, innovation, and new technologies to help ensure America's outdoors remain places where families and friends can learn, exercise, and create meaningful memories.

Countless citizens volunteer their time and talents to protect America's natural resources. By working together with the private and non-profit sectors and the general public, we can help preserve our local parks, lakes, rivers, and working lands. I am grateful for the efforts of all those who work to conserve our Nation's natural wonders, and I encourage citizens to visit [takepride.gov](http://takepride.gov) to learn about more opportunities to help keep our environment healthy and safe.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by

the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2007 as Great Outdoors Month. I call on all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities and to take time to experience and enjoy the outdoors.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:05 a.m., May 29, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 30.

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### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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#### **May 19**

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### **May 20**

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush welcomed Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and his wife, Jeannine de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush had dinner with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer and Mrs. de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot.

#### **May 21**

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop

Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer and his wife, Jeannine de Hoop Scheffer-van Oorschot.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with Steve Holland of Reuters.

#### **May 22**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Cabinet Room, he met with Republican Members of Congress.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ondray T. Harris to be Director of the Community Relations Service at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Diane Auer Jones to be Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education at the Department of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anne Woods Patterson to be Ambassador to Pakistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Schwartz to be member at large and Chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jerome F. Kever to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board (representing carriers).

The President announced his intention to nominate Virgil M. Speakman, Jr., to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board (representing employees).

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles E. F. Millard as Interim Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad: Linda Leuchter Addison; Ronald H. Bloom; Amy S. Epstein; Tyrone Fahner; Andrew M. Klein; Michael A. Menis; Warren Lloyd Miller; Harriet Rotter; Steven Edward Some; and Robert Zarnegin.

The President declared a major disaster in South Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning on May 4 and continuing.

### **May 23**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with members of the U.S. Navy Blue Angels. He then traveled to New London, CT, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Charles R. England.

In the afternoon, the President met with family members of U.S. military personnel killed in the war on terror. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced that he has appointed Noel J. Francisco as a member of the District of Columbia Commission on Judicial Disabilities and Tenure.

### **May 24**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, he met with the Chinese delegation to the U.S.-China Strategic Economic Dialogue.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a photo opportunity with recipients of the 2006 President's "E" Award and "E" Star Award for Export Achievement.

The President announced his intention to nominate Diane G. Farrell to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

The President announced his intention to nominate Preston M. Geren to be Secretary of the Army.

The President announced his intention to nominate James W. Holsinger, Jr., to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service and Surgeon General of the Public Health Service at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael W. Michalak to be Ambassador to Vietnam.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert Charles Tapella to be the Public Printer.

### **May 25**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, where he visited with wounded military personnel and presented Purple Heart medals to five soldiers.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

The President declared a major disaster in Kentucky and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, mudslides, and rockslides on April 14–15.

The President declared a major disaster in Rhode Island and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and inland and coastal flooding on April 15–16.

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes on May 5–7.

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## **Nominations Submitted to the Senate**

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The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

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### **Submitted May 21**

Thomas P. D'Agostino, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, Department of Energy, vice Linton F. Brooks, resigned.

Charles W. Grim, of Oklahoma, to be Director of the Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, for the term of 4 years (re-appointment).

Eric G. John,  
of Indiana, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.

***Submitted May 22***

Diane Auer Jones,  
of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, vice Sally Stroup, resigned.

Jerome F. Kever,  
of Illinois, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2008 (reappointment).

Anne Woods Patterson,  
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Michael Schwartz,  
of Illinois, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2012 (reappointment).

Virgil M. Speakman, Jr.,  
of Ohio, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2009 (reappointment).

***Submitted May 23***

Ondray T. Harris,  
of Virginia, to be Director, Community Relations Service, for a term of 4 years, vice Sharee M. Freeman.

***Withdrawn May 23***

Michael E. Baroody,  
of Virginia, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of 7 years from October 27, 2006, vice Harold D. Stratton, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on March 5, 2007.

Michael E. Baroody,  
of Virginia, to be Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, vice Harold D.

Stratton, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on March 5, 2007.

***Submitted May 24***

Diane G. Farrell,  
of Connecticut, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2011, vice Joseph Max Cleland, term expired.

Henrietta Holsman Fore,  
of Nevada, to be Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Randall L. Tobias, resigned.

Preston M. Geren,  
of Texas, to be Secretary of the Army, vice Francis J. Harvey, resigned.

James W. Holsinger, Jr.,  
of Kentucky, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, subject to qualifications therefor as provided by law and regulations, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service for a term of 4 years, vice Richard H. Carmona, term expired.

Michael W. Michalak,  
of Michigan, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

William J. Powell,  
of West Virginia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of West Virginia, vice W. Craig Broadwater, deceased.

Robert Charles Tapella,  
of Virginia, to be Public Printer, vice Bruce R. James, retired.

Amul R. Thapar,  
of Kentucky, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky, vice Joseph M. Hood, retiring.



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## **Checklist of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

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### ***Released May 21***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

### ***Released May 22***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to South Dakota

Fact sheet: Border Security and Immigration Reform Agreement Overcomes 1986 Mistakes

Fact sheet: Immigration Fact Check: Responding to Key Myths

### ***Released May 23***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto and Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser Frances Fragos Townsend

Fact sheet: A Record of Achievement on Border Security and Worksite Enforcement

Fact sheet: Keeping America Safe From Attack

### ***Released May 25***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Scott M. Stanzel

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 988

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2206

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Kentucky

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Rhode Island

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Iowa

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## **Acts Approved by the President**

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### ***Approved May 25***

H.R. 988 / Public Law 110-27  
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5757 Tilton Avenue in Riverside, California, as the "Lieutenant Todd Jason Bryant Post Office"